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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/024,625	12/18/2001	Ian D. McRury	022956-71 (MIT-239)	3998

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EXAMINER

EREZO, DARWIN P

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3731

DATE MAILED: 06/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/024,625

Applicant(s)

MCRURY ET AL.

Examiner

Darwin P. Erez

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-8,20,21 and 23-34 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 8 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7,20,21 and 23-34 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
4. Claims 1, 3-7, 20, 21 and 23-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,409,743 to Fenton, Jr. and in view of US 6,010,516 to Hulka.

Fenton teaches a first and second lengths of suture **13**, such as polydioxanone (col. 6, line 63); a weldable material, such as the collar **1**; and a suture welding system comprising a working end **25** having a suture contacting element. The main embodiments of the Fenton reference are directed toward the working end being a heating element or an ultrasonic horn. However, Fenton does recite that other well-

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known techniques, such as optical energy, electrical or RF, can be used to weld the sutures together (col. 4, lines 43-51). Fenton is merely silent with regards to the details of said other known techniques.

On the other hand, Hulka teaches a well known coaptation clamp device that uses RF technology, wherein the device comprises an electrosurgical energy source **12** configured to generate radio frequency waves, and electrodes **22**, which is necessary for completing the bipolar circuit. That is, one electrode would inherently provide the RF energy while the other electrode would inherently return the RF energy in order for the current to flow. Hulka also teaches an RF device that is configured to provide a variable gap that can be selectively adjustable between an open and closed position, and wherein the RF device has a pod in any of the serrated portion shown in Fig. 1. (Fenton also teaches a pod formed between element 26' that is capable of securing a suture).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device of Fenton to include the RF technology taught by Hulka since the Fenton reference itself teaches that the device would work with RF technology and that Hulka is merely being provided to teach a generally well known RF device and its associated structures.

The above combination also teaches a device that is capable of being used in the method of welding a first length of suture and a second length of suture, wherein the modified device provides an electrosurgical energy source; and a welding device that is used to secure two loose strands of suture **13** together.

Response to Arguments

5. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 has been withdrawn in view of the applicant's remarks (pages 9-10).
6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3-7, 20, 21 and 23-34 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Darwin P. Erez who's telephone number is (571) 272-4695. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30-4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anhtuan T. Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-4963. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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ANH TUAN T. NGUYEN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

6/7/06.